(b) Government have taken several steps to boost exports to these countries. They are :

(i) Separate trade agreements and protocols have been signed with the majority of the republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union.

(ii) Greater marketing thrust in the changed economic environment including more effective participation in Trade Fairs, Exhibitions, Buyer-Seller Meets, etc.

(iii) Promotion of direct contracts at the commercial enterprises level.

(iv) Greater emphasis on new forms of cooperation, such as joint ventures.

A liberal counter-trade mechanism has been put into place by the Ministry of Commerce enabling importers/exporters to buy commodities like certain types of fertilizers, non-ferrous metals, steel items, metal scrap and newsprint through the counter trade regime.

Crisis in tea industry

557. SHRI G. G. SWELL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the tea industry is facing a crisis;

(b) whether the cost of production of one kg. of tea is more than its sale price;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor, and

(d) whether Government are taking any remedial measures in this regard ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED) : (a) The tea industry is facing difficulties on account of reduced purchases by the CIS countries, which were a major buyer of Indian tea during the previous years. There has also been a loss of production to the extent of 28.60 Million Kgs. during the period January to September, 1992 as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.

(b) Estimated cost of production of tea during 1992-93 on all India basis at Rs. 38.93 per kg. is lower than the all India average auction price during April to October, 1992 at Rs. 39.90 per kg.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Export of rice to Cuba

558. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have since decided to export rice to Cuba;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if the answer to Part (a) above be in the negative, the reasons thereof ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. An agreement between Food Corporation of India and Empresa Cubana Importadora De Alimentos Alimport Hawana, Cuba was signed on 30-9-92 for export of 10,000 MT of rice to Cuba. 10,177.18 MT of rice have since been exported.

Dunkel proposals

559. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to agreee to the Dunkel proposals; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED) : (a) and (b) Government have not yet taken a final view on the proposals of Director General, GATT, with regard to the Uruguay Round of Negotiations. Government propose to initiate a full debate in Parliament on this subject, and a final view would only be taken thereafter.

Increase in export earnings

560. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been substantial increase in the export

earnings during the period upto September, 1992 in the current year as compared to the corresponding period of last year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the items through which such increase in the exports was achieved and the details thereof ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED) : (a) and (b) India's aggregate exports during the first six months of the current financial year, i.e., April-September, 1992 amounted to US $ 8549 million (Rs. 24,403 crores) as compared to US $ 8,113 million (Rs. 18,711 crores) during April-September, 1991, thereby registering a growth of 5.4% (30.4%, in rupee terms).

(c) The commodity break-up of exports is available upto the period April—August, 1992. According to the provisional figures, the products, which registered an increase during April—August, 1992 as compared to April—August, 1991 include oil meals, leather & manufactures, chemicals & related products, Engineering Goods, Electronics and Computer software, Readymade garments, Cotton fabrics, Man-made textiles, Natural Silk Textiles, Wool & Woollen manufactures, Coir & Coir manufactures, Jute manufactures, Handicrafts, Carpets, Petroleum products, etc.

Establishment of profit centres by MMTC

561. SHRI P. UPENDRA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether M.M.T.C. is taking up a programme to establish profit centres within the organisation to cut down expenditure and maximise profits;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when it is likely to be implemented ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. MMTC has now organised itself into several profit centres encompassing a verity of specialities. Each profit centre will have sufficient operational independence to take appropriate trading decisions. Further, each profit centre shall perform the functions of exports, imports and domestic marketing for their entire product range.

(c) It is already under implementation.

Failure of newspaper industry to lift the stock

562. SHRI P. UPENDRA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the newspaper industry is not lifting the stocks of newsprint from the indigenous newsprint paper mills allotted to them;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the State Trading Corporation is holding huge stocks of standard newsprint and glazed newsprint because of the failure of newspaper industry to lift the stocks; and

(c) if so, what action has been taken by Government in this regard ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED) : (a) Import of newsprint has been decanalised *w.e.f.* 1-4-92. In accordance with the existing guidelines on the subject, the newspaper units having more than 200 metric tonnes of annual entitlement can import one tonne of standard newsprint freely for every two tonnes of indigenously produced newsprint purchased by them from the indigenous newsprint mills. The prescribed ratio of 2:1 indigenous and imported newsprint is being enforced by the Registrar of newspapers for India.

(b) and (c) STC is presently holding the following stock of newsprint. Necessary action is being taken by STC for its disposal through tender :

Standard . .	671 MTs.
Glazed . .	2036 MTs.
Total . . .	2707 MTs.